Protect, Serve, and Deport

Amada Armenta

Published by University of California Press

Armenta, Amada.
Protect, Serve, and Deport: The Rise of Policing as Immigration Enforcement.

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Protect, Serve, and Deport exposes the on-the-ground workings of local immigration enforcement in Nashville, Tennessee. Between 2007 and 2012, Nashville’s local jail participated in an immigration enforcement program called 287(g), which turned jail employees into immigration officers who identified over ten thousand removable immigrants for deportation. The vast majority of those identified for removal were not serious criminals but Latino residents arrested by local police for minor violations. Protect, Serve, and Deport explains how local politics, state laws, institutional policies, and police practices work together to deliver immigrants into an expanding federal deportation system, conveying powerful messages about race, citizenship, and belonging.

“Amada Armenta artfully weaves participants’ justifications for their actions with her own scholarly analysis, finding that bureaucratic priorities, relevant laws, and local norms all help officers distance themselves from the frequently grave consequences of their work.” DORIS MARIE PROVINE, Professor Emerita, School of Justice and Social Inquiry, Arizona State University

“This work evocatively shows how local police and jail employees have been drawn unwittingly into arresting and deporting hundreds of thousands of law-abiding immigrants and how this activity erodes trust in the police and fractures families and communities. This is painful but essential reading.” CHARLES R. EPP, coauthor of Pulled Over: How Police Stops Define Race and Citizenship

“At a time when enforcement is expanding, this book is increasingly salient for understanding how enforcement is actually performed. It is essential, critical, urgent reading today.” CECILIA MENJÍVAR, author of Enduring Violence: Ladina Women’s Lives in Guatemala

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